

PSYOP in Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations: Preparing for Korean Reunification

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Editorial Abstract: Captain Mushtare examines the evolution of US Army Psychological Operations forces and practices since the 1950-1953 Korean War, to include changes in training, force structure, and doctrine. He advocates the need for significant revisions in each of these areas, particularly in preparation for future scenarios on the Korean Peninsula.

Breaking the “PSYWAR Syndrome”

The transformation of psychological operations (PSYOP) training and execution must take place in the context of ongoing PSYOP in the Middle East. At the same time, other threats outside of the US Central Command (USCENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) must not be overlooked. The continuously looming menace of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a case in point. More than fifty years after the partition of the Korean peninsula, the DPRK continues to threaten US interests, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and other Asian allies. North and South Koreans continue on-and-off talks that suggest a mutual goal of reunification. Whether achieved through diplomatic means or as the result of a renewal and subsequently victorious conclusion of combat operations, reunification may find PSYOP forces unprepared and incapable of providing support unless effective systemic changes to training and operations are implemented.

Therefore, United States Army psychological operations must undergo an immediate and dramatic improvement in training and doctrinal development to provide effective support to regional combat operations, and to prove useful in stabilization and reconstruction operations. Despite a long history of US PSYOP efforts during the Korean War, and the more than fifty subsequent years of combined ROK-US military operations, today’s PSYOP forces



*The ghost of PSYOP past.
(PSYWAR.org)*

appear ill-prepared to conduct effective operations on the Korean peninsula.

Despite significant success during World War II, the then-named psychological warfare (PSYWAR) units were disbanded in the post-bellum years. The cyclic disbanding and neglect of the importance of psychological warfare—the “PSYWAR syndrome”—would be repeated following subsequent US conflicts. Following the Vietnam War and another ten year regression, psychological operations revival finally began under the Reagan administration. Shortly after the creation of the United States Special Operations Command in 1987, both Army civil affairs and psychological operations forces were organized under the US Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Thus, psychological operations began gaining greater DOD funding focus coincident with the decline of the Cold War. The US-led 1991 Persian Gulf War involved a large, highly publicized PSYOP effort, due

to its largely overt nature. During the war, PSYOP efforts were credited with netting a large number of the 87,000 enemy prisoners of war (EPW) counted at the close of the conflict. Thus, the end of the first Persian Gulf War did not witness the same downward spiral into PSYOP irrelevancy recurrent since World War II. On the contrary, there is a high commitment to PSYOP troops in the Global War on Terror, while progress has been made toward increasing the current active duty PSYOP force structure.

Post-Cold War Military Paradigm Shifts

The onset of the post-Cold War period also saw the rise of intrastate conflicts over the once prevalent interstate wars. With the decline in East-West tensions, neither the Soviet Union (later Russia) nor the United States was willing to maintain Cold War levels of military and economic assistance to their respective allies, particularly in strategically inconsequential parts of the world such as sub-Saharan Africa. This allowed international organizations, including the UN, to become more directly involved in efforts to bring an end to several long-standing conflicts.

Therefore, as the United Nations became increasingly involved in peacekeeping operations so did the United States. Between 1990 and 1995 the United States executed forty-seven major operational deployments—a 50 percent increase over the Cold War years. The latter 1990s involved even more frequent and larger troop deployments

to the Balkans in peacekeeping roles and a continued presence in the Persian Gulf. Thus, the United States averaged new involvement every eighteen months in states requiring post-conflict reconstruction. Further, military personnel serving in non-combat roles found themselves involved in missions they never historically trained to conduct.

The post modern period in military affairs, characterized as the “interpenetrability of civilian and military spheres,” increased interaction between deployed soldiers and a host of organizations with varying interests. These relationships show increasing usage of the military in non-traditional functions (multinational peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance), or in current post-conflict environments such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGO) and inter-governmental organizations (IGO) permeate these surroundings, providing a myriad of vital services to needy populations. The number NGOs alone rapidly increased from approximately 6,000 in 1990, to more than 26,000 by the end of the decade, and these trends continue into the new century.

Following the devastating terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the United States is much more mindful of the fact that “failed states matter.” Prior to this event, President George W. Bush noted he “would be very careful about using our troops as nation builders. I believe the role of the military is to fight and win war...I believe we’re overextended in too many places.” However, it has since become clear that, “In the age of global terrorism, transnational crime networks, and border-hopping disease, state weakness and failure are a real threat to Americans and their way of life.” Thus, the concept of stabilizing and reconstructing such states, as a means to rehabilitate and strengthen both internal and external security, is at the forefront of US national security interests. However, doing so requires not just improved security, but comprehensively addressing of other cross-cutting issues that foster stable governments and societies. These

include participatory governance, socioeconomic well-being, and justice and reconciliation.

Korean Reunification

While it is clear that the United States military must be prepared for conflict based on Iranian and North Korean nuclear ambitions, it must also be ready to support the potential destabilizing effects of Korean reunification. Due to the protracted nature of the 1950-1953 Korean War—which never officially ended—reunification would constitute a post-conflict environment. Partition has greatly divided not only Korean territory, but the culture as well. In the event this scenario comes to pass, PSYOP forces should be fully capable of supporting stabilization and rebuilding operations. However, they are not adequately prepared to effectively conduct such support—and particularly in Korea. This is despite more than fifty years of combined operations with Republic of Korea (ROK) forces. Unless US forces reform, and improve existing PSYOP capabilities, we may again experience the painful lessons from previous Korean War psychological warfare efforts. The following paragraphs offer a prescription of ten PSYOP transformation recommendations to help meet the challenges of future US operations.

Stabilization And Reconstruction Operations

Increasing Emphasis on Stabilization and Reconstruction

Post-conflict operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, along with US National Security Strategy emphasis on threats posed by terrorist havens and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, mean we must actively seek to stabilize states in danger of failure or collapse. In a world of increasingly globalized dangers, the United States has a disproportionate interest in ensuring a functional international system.

In September 2004, the US Department of State created the Office

of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS), and named Ambassador Carlos Pascual to the post. The mission of this new office is “to lead, coordinate and institutionalize US Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations, and to help stabilize and reconstruct societies in transition from conflict or civil strife, so they can reach a sustainable path toward peace, democracy and a market economy.” In 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated “we have seen how states where chaos, corruption and cruelty reign can pose threats to their neighbors, to their regions, and to the entire world. And so we are working to strengthen international capacities to address conditions in failed, failing and post-conflict states.”

Conducting such operations may also include close liaison with Department of Defense agencies, especially in a post-conflict scenario. The Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization outlines these actions:

- Coordinate civilian stabilization and reconstruction participation in military planning and exercises.

- Deploy Humanitarian, Stabilization and Reconstruction Team (HSRT) to Combatant Commands to participate in post-conflict planning where US military forces will be heavily engaged.

- Develop mechanisms for coordinating military and civilian operational planning across the full spectrum of possible military involvement in stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) operations.

Thus, implementing comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction programs, to promote democracy and security while reducing terrorist safe-havens and WMD proliferation, is at the heart of current US national security interests. With the reality of global terrorism, the United States does not have the luxury of ignoring troubled countries no matter how small, poor, or distant.

The “Four Pillars of Post-Conflict Reconstruction”

The Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Association

of the United States Army (AUSA) have jointly formulated a four-pillared approach to post-conflict reconstruction. These are means to stabilize a state through improvement of four vital areas: security; social and economic well-being; governance & participation; and justice & reconciliation. Glaringly, current US military doctrine does not articulate how to provide adequate support to bolster the cross-cutting imperatives involved in stabilizing and reconstructing a state. It is unlikely this will continue, due to the current emphasis on post-conflict strategies, ongoing US Army transformation, and AUSA involvement in the four pillars program. Therefore, it is important to highlight each area which helps facilitate effective stabilization and reconstruction operations.

Security is the precondition for fulfilling the other three pillars of post-conflict reconstruction. While external actors may provide the initial role, indigenous actors must ultimately provide lasting security on behalf of the country itself. Max Weber asserts a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. Therefore, the state's overall legitimacy is dependent, along with the deliverance of other "political goods," on establishment of this monopoly of the use of force within its borders. This pillar of security includes protection from both external and internal threats. Adequate security establishment fosters an environment where citizens can conduct daily business relatively free of violence or coercion from government, organized crime, political organizations, and ethnic groups. This can be quite difficult in post-conflict societies where armed factions have disintegrated and diffused back into society, but possess no civilian skills to earn a living. The importance of effective disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former armed forces and armed factions is evident, given their potential destabilizing effects on a state's national security.

The improvement of social and economic well-being is essential to post-conflict operations. It is true

that in the wake of violent conflict only a small window of opportunity exists to restore economic hope and social well-being. With greater security, improved economies reverse the myopic behaviors induced by warfare. This further reduces the number of individuals who are likely to seek employment from insurgent groups. The short-term efforts are focused on returning basic human services and then shift into long-term social and economic development. Essential human capital depleted due to the conflict must be replenished, either by returning refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their homes, or by completely re-creating these capabilities. Health care must be rapidly expanded to combat the spread of diseases and to treat those already afflicted—especially those with HIV/AIDS and malaria—which spread very rapidly in the wake of violent conflict. Improved educational opportunities are a must, to help reduce the risk of conflict and provide long-term social, political, and religious tolerances. A state's inability to support basic education also leaves room for religious schools that exclude women, or indoctrinate young men to elevate violence as a political means. Similarly, economic diversification efforts must target primary resource/commodity dependencies, which have been found to be the single greatest predictor of conflict. Reducing primary commodity dependence helps to minimize natural resource predation and rent-seeking behaviors, which are integral to funding rebellions.

Improving governance includes creating legitimate mechanisms, processes, and institutions, to ensure enfranchisement of the populace, and deliver necessary political goods. Participation is essential, because it further helps to legitimize the government and promotes governmental accountability to the citizenry. Thus, the cardinal rule of governance is to ensure indigenous ownership of the process. Guaranteeing



*MIA remains repatriation at the DMZ.
(Defense Link)*

free and unfettered media is also vital to allowing for the free flow of information, as well as further promoting government accountability.

Establishing rule of law in post-conflict states, while also addressing past grievances, crimes, and atrocities is vital toward moving societies further away from the clutches of the conflict trap. Judicial systems must be created that are independent (of the executive), impartial, and accountable. State corrections institutions must be humane, and law enforcement agencies must be effective and mindful of human rights. The concept of post-conflict reconciliation is both a goal—something to achieve—and a process: a means to achieve that goal. It is comprised of four major components: healing, truth-telling, restorative justice, and reparations. Clearly, reconciliation is a long-term process; the damage wrought by mass atrocities and lawlessness in post-conflict societies usually takes years, if not decades, to begin to repair. But, failure to address justice and reconciliation needs on a priority basis is a recipe for failure in reconstruction operations.

Therefore, it is important to begin establishment of reconciliation mechanisms, such as truth-telling commissions, in the early stages of

post-conflict operations. However, their effects may not be evident for generations.

Increased Face-to-Face Interactions

The concept of military forces operating in face-to-face roles among the civilian populace is inherent in stabilization and reconstruction operations. Such missions require increased language, cultural, and regional training to communicate not only with the indigenous populace, but with the host of IGOs, NGOs, and other transnational actors. When conducted properly, these operations can improve perceptions of US involvement, and may also improve critical US human intelligence (HUMINT) on significant threats. It is true that IGOs, IOs (international organizations), and NGOs frequently possess valuable information, but are reluctant to share intelligence for fear of reducing both their impartiality and rapport with the population. However, increasing prevalence of these organizations makes contacts and cooperation inevitable. Further, increased positive military interactions with the indigenous populace and NGO, IGO, and IO members can help build social capital, to the great benefit of both the US and the post-conflict state.

Building social capital is critical to strengthening the viability of a post-conflict state, and ultimately for making democracy work. Social capital describes organizational features such as trust, norms, and networks, that improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions. Wars destroy human and social capital, and civil war in particular can have the effect of switching behavior from an equilibrium—in which there is an expectation of honesty—to one with an expectation of corruption. Once the reputation for honesty has been lost, the incentive for future honest behavior becomes much weaker.

As wars are waged and violence escalates, economies decline, large-scale migration of refugees and IDPs occur,

and myopic outlooks on life take hold. Because life is so uncertain, people shorten their time horizons and are less concerned with building a reputation for honesty. From the perspective of the “Prisoner’s Dilemma,” war-torn societies do not observe the future, but merely focus on the present and the payoff for immediate defection. Thus, rebuilding trust through repeated interactions is essential to resuming normal life and catalyzing commerce in the post-war years.

When success spreads through a network, it stimulates more cooperation, and provides models of what works. Innovation increases as the latest information and trends create a large-scale learning system, in which many potential users share knowledge.

Networks can help build the four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction by addressing important grass roots level issues. This is perhaps most significant

...PSYOP has perhaps suffered most from identification with the hardware and missions of the tactical battlefield – that is, leaflet delivery, loudspeakers, and radio broadcasting.

when beginning reconciliation processes between former warring parties. Establishing trustful and respectful relations between men and women, and particularly between particularly targeted groups, is essential for fashioning a democratic society.

As the US finds itself more and more entwined in attempted stabilization and reconstruction efforts in failing, failed states, and post-conflict states, the military will continue to play a vital security, training, and humanitarian assistance roles. Increased face-to-face interactions provide opportunities to realize the “shadow of the future” within the indigenous populaces. Through mechanisms such as grass-roots level networks, the United States can help move a nation toward democracy and stability while reducing insurgent groups’ labor pools. In the Age of the Network,

horizontal connections explode, not vertical ones. The winners in the 21st century—companies, countries, and people—will be those with the greatest social capital.

The Role of PSYOP in Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations

As one of the few US military arms mainly concerned with “soft power,” psychological operations forces have a vested interest in promoting favorable US perceptions abroad—especially the insurgency-ridden post-conflict nations of Afghanistan and Iraq. This is equally true in US efforts to resuscitate failing states and stabilize entire geographic regions.

a. The Four Pillars: Simply put, psychological operations themes should strengthen the four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction. While many themes are in line with such concepts, it is imperative we comprehensively target these four critical areas and associated sub-tasks. Psychological operations forces exist to influence the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals to support US national

objectives. Therefore, PSYOP forces transformation is imperative for them to best support stabilization and reconstruction operations.

Building Social Capital: Again, this is a central concept behind improving stability within failed states. Psychological operations forces are critical to building trust at local levels, to improve perceptions of the US and their military forces, and to facilitate cooperation on the part of the indigenous population. PSYOP forces are the primary “soft power” assets the US can utilize to catalyze other operations. Such operations necessitate interpersonal, face-to-face, two-way communications. Again, this requires specific expertise in language, customs, culture, and the region, as well as utilization of networks to expand influence throughout communities.

Provide Critical HUMINT: The vital importance of reliable human intelligence has become very apparent post-9/11. The Defense Intelligence Agency's Strategic Support Branch provides enhanced human intelligence capabilities to better support combatant commanders in the war on terror. In addition, PSYOP forces could provide a great deal of useful and reliable information to the US Army and DOD, through interactions with civil society and transnational actors in a given region. While not explicitly stated as one of the five PSYOP missions, proper training, preparation, and execution would yield important HUMINT contributions to the continued Global War on Terror.

The Republic Of Korea

Lessons Learned, But Not Heeded

With more than fifty years of US involvement in the Korean armistice, one would expect modern psychological operations to be quite adept. However, this is not the case. Modern PSYOP forces are ill-prepared to conduct operations in Korea, and especially in the event of reunification. Korean War era PSYWAR soldiers noted numerous shortcomings they deemed essential to effective operations in Korea. The most glaring was little, if any, training received prior to deployment. In many cases, such inadequacies exist today. While North Korea's tight control of internal information poses difficulties for effective US psychological operations, it is important to also address the difficulties of operations within South Korea. If the US takes on stabilization and reconstruction operations following Korean reunification, and Korea accepts this US role, we would be communicating with two distinct societies.

Mutual Unintelligibility

Current US psychological operations in the Republic of Korea involve various exercise deployments throughout the year. These are short in duration and US PSYOP forces redeploy to the United States upon their conclusion.

Although these are combined exercises within the Combined Psychological Operations Task Force (CPOTF), both sides have difficulty communicating with one another. There are insufficient numbers of translators, and few US and ROK counterparts speak one another's language effectively, if at all. Therefore, the entire task force relies upon a minority of personnel who can communicate in both languages. This was especially evident in designing of leaflets and preparation of radio/television broadcasts. Such observations highlight how PSYOP forces remained ill-prepared for contingencies requiring face-to-face operations, as in a stabilization and reconstruction role. Further, more than a half-century of partition has exacerbated the initial bifurcation of the once homogenous Korean culture. PSYOP soldiers must not only understand "ROK Korean" language and culture, they must distinguish between—and utilize—"DPRK Korean" language and culture, plus the regional dialects within each category.

South Korean Anti-Americanism

Anti-Americanism in South Korea has been on the rise, yet US PSYOP is doing little to combat this. There are no US PSYOP forces stationed on the Korean peninsula to provide active PSYOP support to the Combined Forces Command (CFC). However, South Korea still constitutes a psychological battlefield because North Korea vehemently focuses on nurturing anti-American sentiment in the ROK. This indicates North Korea is still engaged in a civil war against South Korea, and is currently attacking the alliances of its rival. While there are many reasons for the rise of anti-US sentiments, some of the most prominent are: US military bases on Korean soil, the Korean media's negative image of the United States, changing demographics, Korean nationalism, and skepticism toward US policies. But the demographics have shifted as Korean War generation South Koreans, who most strongly support close ties with the United States, are waning. Further, current trends

suggest it is very possible South Korea's resentment toward the United States will become more aggravated in coming years. Countering such trends requires forces that are trained and capable of influencing public opinion in favor of the United States.

Training Shortfalls

Despite the worldwide reduction in conventional interstate wars, and rise of civil wars in the 1990s, US PSYOP retains a "Cold War mentality" in how it trains for and executes operations. In order to keep pace with the rapid changes in mainstream media, US forces habitually place a large degree of emphasis on the technological aspects of PSYOP product production, distribution, and dissemination. However, regardless of the dissemination mode, the most important aspect of conducting psychological operations is message content. Hastily deployed Korean War psychological warfare soldiers determined their inadequate training was one of the primary disadvantages to effective operations. While such shortcomings were known early on, the cyclic "PSYWAR syndrome" hindered subsequent efforts to modernize and improve PSYOP forces. When the US again acknowledged the importance of psychological operations, and funding subsequently increased, we took great strides to improve technological aspects of both print and broadcast capabilities. These primarily focused on long-range dissemination methods, via broadcast or leaflet. While face-to-face operations via loudspeakers may have been adequate in the Cold War era, this is really only one-way communication. However, governments threatened with insurgency should regard PSYOP, particularly face-to-face communications, as a first line of internal defense. Thus, the PSYOP role in US-led stabilization and reconstruction operations provides the impetus for training soldiers to more effectively foster interpersonal, face-to-face, two-way communications.

However, as a result of the predominant focus on technological innovations and acquisitions, current

psychological operations forces are not equipped with the requisite training for post-conflict environments. Adequate training in culture, language, and region still falls by the wayside under the opinion that familiarity is all that is needed for effective psychological operations. A cookie-cutter approach continues to dominate the PSYOP field: leaflets or broadcasts deemed effective during prior conflicts are dusted off, translated, and disseminated to a new target audience. Therefore, only limited linguistic, cultural, or regional training appears necessary.

In the 1980s, the Army separated both its psychological operations and civil affairs forces from the foreign area officer (FAO) military occupational specialty. The change is disturbing because it separated psychological operations from the specialty that had provided its intellectual lifeblood. The core of the area expertise (knowledge of foreign cultures) and the analytic capability of psychological operations originally fell within the FAO specialty. Contemporary PSYOP training is disjointed and largely ineffectual for future of US operations. We must utilize less overt methods of message dissemination than broadcasting a prerecorded compact disc over a loudspeaker. Additionally, PSYOP soldiers should not be clearly identifiable as PSYOP soldiers. Their actions at the local level should be linked to persuasion principles which induce indigenous people to act in a desirable manner. Again, this requires proper training. Therefore, by building expertise in the appropriate areas of study, and revising doctrine and techniques to support stabilization and reconstruction operations, psychological operations forces will be able to build trust in communities. In turn, they will utilize and map networks to identify appropriate target audiences and themes, and help improve human intelligence for the supported commander. Such preparatory measures are essential to preparing for the challenges posed by Korean reunification.

Observers of US PSYOP generally agree that enlisted specialists “conduct psychological operations.” In other

words, they craft the messages for specified target audiences. Obviously, training these soldiers is paramount to ensuring effective and persuasive communications. However, current training is inadequate for crafting long-range dissemination messages (leaflet, radio/television broadcast), let alone for face-to-face operations in a post-conflict environment. Immediately following basic training, PSYOP soldiers attend a twelve week 37F Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The course provides doctrine, including concepts, tactics, techniques, procedures organization, equipment, capabilities, and employment across the range of military operations. Despite the doctrinal assertion that PSYOP soldiers bring an in-depth knowledge of the culture, religion, values and mind set of TAs within a country or region of operations, they receive no specific training in these areas whatsoever. This is a severe shortcoming, because culture is at once the most basic, and broadest environmental determinant of individual behavior.

Following the 37F AIT Course, soldiers attend a Basic Military Language Course (BMLC). However, this provides little more than language “familiarity.” While the current BMLC language proficiency goals for its graduates increased in 2004, the standards are still below those needed post-conflict. Under the old standards, soldiers were to achieve listening skill levels in which they comprehended with reasonable accuracy, though only when this listening involved short memorized utterances or formulae. Under revised standards the course requires a slightly higher level, in which they can understand very simple face-to-face conversations in a standard dialect. Similarly, pre-2004 reading level standards left graduates unable to

read connected prose. Current standards require one to be capable of reading very simple connected written material. Previous graduation evaluation criteria, and indeed Department of the Army language tracking, only focused on these listening and reading skills. However, DOD recently expanded these parameters to include an emphasis on speaking skills, mostly due to the widely acknowledged lack of US language capabilities in the post-9/11 era. We are also paying for our decades of neglect—inside and outside our government—of foreign languages and area studies. Therefore, the Army now requires current BMLC graduates to reach a level in which they are unable to produce continuous discourse, except with rehearsed material. Meanwhile,



ROK-US media event. (Defense Link)

tactical PSYOP units remain doctrinally charged with conducting face-to-face communications, despite fact that this is largely one-way communication via loudspeakers, all due to a lack of language expertise.

While PSYOP units possess other enlisted members who are more proficient in language capabilities, these soldiers are largely used for translating, and are not trained in psychological operations. Such Human Intelligence Collectors are organized under the Army's military intelligence branch. These soldiers attend language training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, California, where they are held to higher standards than those required of the Basic Military Language Course. Soldiers assigned

to military occupational specialty 97E are considered “language-dependent” for mission execution, and must retain the same Defense Language Institute minimum levels in language proficiency, or be forced into an alternative military occupational specialty. Conversely, the Army currently classifies Psychological Operations Specialists (37F) as a “non-language-dependent MOS” which is not bound by the same qualification requirements. DOD does not require soldiers to retain languages obtained at government expense, leading to a drain on both budgets and resources. Thus, the doctrinal assertion that PSYOP soldiers provide regional, cultural, and linguistic expertise is largely a misnomer.

Psychological operations officers receive training at a four week Psychological Operations Officer Course (POOC), a seventeen week Regional Studies Course (RSC), and the Basic Military Language Course. Therefore they do not share the enlisted soldiers’ focus on message crafting. Instead, they receive formal regional training to increase their knowledge of a particular geographic area. This is the primary disconnect of the current training system: officers receive the same cursory language course as the enlisted PSYOP specialists, and are likewise not required to maintain language capabilities.

Some officers may attend Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) to study at the postgraduate level. They are often sent to the US Naval Postgraduate School under the auspices of the Special Operations Low-Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC) program, as are civil affairs officers. However, out of the myriad of sub-component areas of PSYOP expertise, SO/LIC is one of many. Psychological operations utilize area studies, language, marketing and advertising, media operations, plus persuasion and social influence. These relevant courses, the very underpinnings of effective PSYOP, are not in the current curriculum. Postgraduate work should

focus on areas that further the study and improvement of PSYOP, and not simply result in a master’s degree in an unrelated field of study.

Further, the PSYOP community does little to provide a professional outlet for academic discourse and institutional knowledge. While some PSYOP soldiers publish articles in the quarterly periodical *Special Warfare*, this is predominantly a Special Forces forum and frequently little more than a newsletter for the SF, civil affairs, and PSYOP branches. The 3rd Psychological Operations Battalion previously published and circulated *The Disseminator* throughout the PSYOP community; however, it fell by the wayside based on the burgeoning needs of supporting Operations Enduring



Between the two Koreas. (Defense Link)

Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Notably, it was not a publication for professional discourse commensurate with *Special Warfare* or other military journals.

Recommendations For Future PSYOP Success

Following are recommendations for psychological operations success in future global US missions. These target three major areas: PSYOP training, PSYOP doctrine development, and PSYOP in the Republic of Korea. These support preparations for a reunification of the Korean peninsula, plus other post-Cold War era needs such as stabilization and reconstruction, all of which require increased face-to-face operations.

- DLI level-of-proficiency language training is a must to provide greater capabilities for all PSYOP soldiers (officer and enlisted). Previous Basic Military Language Course standards are too low to produce the requisite working knowledge needed for face-to-face operations. Recent changes include more stringent requirements, but standards are still below those necessary for operating in post-conflict environments—especially when the rest of the military expects these soldiers to be experts in language and culture. Current standards do not facilitate critical expertise to supported units, necessitated by interactions among an indigenous populace, especially in the face of an ongoing insurgency. At the very least, we must provide psychological operations

soldiers a level of language capability commensurate with DLI graduates. This will place them at the “limited working proficiency” level, allowing them to provide supported commanders far better insights in difficult environments.

- Maintenance of DLI language standards must be a MOSQ requirement for all soldiers. Concomitant with the increased language capabilities, we need standards requiring trained soldiers to maintain their language capabilities. Current PSYOP military occupational specialty requirements do not mandate language upkeep, which should be a necessity for maintaining any PSYOP MOS. To further enhance language viability and ensure a good return on language training investments, PSYOP soldiers should maintain the minimum standards of 2/2/2 to be considered fully MOS qualified. This will also require commanders allow their soldiers appropriate time for mandatory language maintenance training, better sustaining force-wide language readiness.

- Officers Army-wide possess skills vital to PSYOP, especially in critical languages; they should be actively recruited utilizing bonuses and other incentives. In 2004, the Department of the Army Officer Record Brief began

tracking officer language proficiency—including speaking skills. The PSYOP branch should rigorously use this tool to recruit officers possessing critical language capabilities, especially more difficult ones such as Mandarin Chinese, Korean, and Arabic. Proper bonuses or incentives could bring these officers into the PSYOP field, bolstering the population of qualified personnel, while reducing language training time and cost.

- Psychological operations enlisted soldiers must receive regional and cultural training. It is imperative the primary executors of psychological operations understand their target regions. The current training model actually inhibits regional expertise and cultural familiarity by excluding most of the soldiers involved in crafting psychological operations messages and conducting face-to-face operations. This facet of PSYOP remains an historically unaddressed issue, dating back to the Korean War era. Inclusion of proper regional training is crucial to ensuring PSYOP viability in forthcoming global missions.

- Psychological operations officers should pursue master's degrees in PSYOP's underpinning disciplines such as regional studies, persuasion and social influence, and marketing. We cannot underestimate the US PSYOP community's current ability to dispatch officers to various civilian institutions to receive relevant degrees. However, current officers typically attend the US Naval Postgraduate School under the auspices of the Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict program. Meanwhile, Army officers pursuing NPS regional studies degrees are typically studying to be foreign area officers—the “lifeblood” from which PSYOP was removed two decades ago. Regional studies degrees are far more relevant to psychological operations in general. The Naval Postgraduate School has also recently developed a degree focused on stabilization and reconstruction operations, which is becoming more and more relevant to US operations. Furthermore, degrees in marketing, persuasion and social influence will help

build PSYOP institutional knowledge. While the new Army Intermediate Level Education (ILE) program encourages PSYOP attendance at NPS, areas of academic pursuit must be “PSYOP-vital,” and not merely completion of a degree.

- To encourage discourse, the 4th POG should publish and disseminate its own professional military PSYOP journal, and invite reserve component groups and other services to contribute. During the current Global War on Terror and Army transformation processes, it is essential we engage professional minds throughout the PSYOP community. Circulated electronically at all levels, such a journal would integrate knowledge from all PSYOP forces (including joint players) and encourage professional exchange among both active and reserve components. Further, professional publishing would promote the furtherance of PSYOP studies, and initiate new and improved training, doctrine, procurement, equipment, and mission execution practices.

PSYOP Doctrine

Just as current US military doctrine does not adequately address operations in failing, failed, or post-conflict states, neither does PSYOP doctrine address comprehensive support to such operations.

a. Supporting Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations

The military should scrutinize all principles that underpin stabilization and reconstruction operations, most notably the “four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction,” to find doctrinal advancements for PSYOP support. With our increasing focus on stabilization and reconstruction as a strategy in the Global War on Terror, it is especially important for PSYOP to devise methodical means to support these areas.

b. Establishing Psychological Operations Networks

Trained PSYOP personnel should establish Psychological Operations Networks (PONs) as a means of persuading target audiences at a grass-roots level. Such networks utilize interpersonal interactions to build of

social capital, through two-way face-to-face communications in the target language while allowing the mapping of the varied nodes in the network. Delivered messages become more adaptive and persuasive in pursuing PSYOP objectives. This enables improved persuasiveness in supporting all US objectives, while gathering critical HUMINT, identifying insurgents or potential insurgents, facilitating stabilization and reconstruction, and ultimately winning more “hearts and minds” than previously possible.

c. Deployment of Trained PSYOP Personnel to South Korea

It is imperative we expedite training and deployment of a PSYOP detachment to the Korean peninsula. Current US geo-strategic positioning strategy is clearing withdrawing troops from bases in South Korea. Conversely, this is when we should be deploying psychological operations forces to the peninsula. This unit should be fully trained in the Korean language and culture, with special care given to determining divergent points between these two distinctly separate nations. Current PSYOP soldiers deploy to the ROK multiple times a year for exercises, then redeploy back to the United States. Thus, the focus is merely on the exercise at hand, and associated rotational training issues, not on improving combined psychological operations. Further, these multiple transitions are far from seamless and often detract from improving relations or capabilities. A continuous presence on the Korean peninsula avoids the difficulties that are always associated with short deployments to and redeployments from the region. After more than fifty years of combined operations, PSYOP forces should have more substantial ties and capabilities within the Republic of Korea than we currently possess.

Active Combined Psychological Operations

We must immediately begin active combined psychological operations, focused on both ROK and DPRK target audiences. Permanently deployed PSYOP soldiers should study current marketing and media operations within

both South and North Korea. These units should focus on counterpropaganda operations to dilute anti-American sentiment, and promote the ROK-US alliance. Such operations will further hone the PSYOP capability in the Republic of Korea by ensuring language immersion for current Korean speakers (one of the most difficult languages), and maintaining up to date knowledge of regional and cultural trends.

Conclusion


Given the relatively short history of US psychological operations forces as a continuous unit, and the cyclic post-war neglect that has hindered developmental progress, today's PSYOP forces may have finally broken with the "PSYWAR syndrome." In light of effective changes, especially in the realm of individual training issues, contemporary PSYOP forces have a precise moment in history to affect such reforms.

While technological advancements have increased global communication capabilities and simultaneously reduced cost, true PSYOP transformation emphasis needs to shift toward providing soldiers more comprehensive training. Technology merely serves as a means of dissemination, not as the origination of the message itself. The modern parallel to the Korean War era PSYWAR emphasis on "quantity over quality" is the current emphasis on "technology over training." This is further underscored by the predominant tactical PSYOP role as loudspeaker operators, instead of face-to-face communicators with verbal abilities. The emphasis on disseminating previously recorded messages continues to perpetuate an ethos of limited "warrior deejays" instead of capable "warrior diplomats." As the US Army Special Operations Command SOF Truths state: "Humans are more important than hardware; Quality is better than quantity; Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced; and competent Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies occur." Hence, the PSYOP community needs to analyze its current human capital investments and determine how to maximize their efficacy. Consequently, such increased

investment also requires careful scrutiny of those areas of the world most critical for developing linguistic, cultural, and regional capabilities.

The rising importance of stabilization and reconstruction operations also necessitates careful contemplation on the part of psychological operations planners. We must develop specific doctrinal support to the four pillars of post-conflict reconstruction and their respective sub-tasks, to best enhance PSYOP capabilities and efficacy under such scenarios. Due to the growing importance of such operations, such research should not merely be placed on hold until we complete doctrinal revisions.

The lens of Korean reunification illuminates the relevance of initiating substantive changes in the aforementioned critical areas. The prospect of conducting stabilization and reconstruction operations on the Korean peninsula represents a multitude of difficulties for US forces, especially interactions with both the North Koreans and South Koreans. While we must ready PSYOP forces for general stabilization missions, the severity of the protracted Cold War partition makes the Korean case a unique challenge. Generations of North Koreans have now been raised completely from birth in the ubiquity of "Kimism." Further, prolonged partition of the Korean peninsula has fostered two separate and distinguishable cultures, with notable linguistic differences. PSYOP forces must understand and effectively utilize such peculiarities if we want to be truly persuasive.

While the people of South Korea have not been inculcated with anti-American ideology commensurate with North Korea, external DPRK propaganda is at least partially accountable for rising anti-US sentiments. Such opposition further heightens the difficulties the US would face during Korean reunification. In light of such trends, current US PSYOP forces are doing little to counter such anti-American perceptions. Continued inaction further reduces future PSYOP prospects for success under a stabilization and reconstruction role, and threatens to undermine the ROK-US alliance. It is imperative for the US to forward position forces, properly trained in Korean language and culture, to conduct active perception operations. In transforming to best support US national interests, the PSYOP community should carefully research all vital areas, to avoid "cookie-cutter" approaches and provide continuous improvements to the psychological operations profession. As the United States becomes more proactive in preserving its national security through stabilizing other states—sometimes through the active use of our military forces—our PSYOP community must always stand ready. 

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